(c) The State Government of Maharashtra has reported eleven cases of poaching in Melghat Tiger Sanctuary and none in Tadoba National Park during the last three years. Nine offenders have been prosecuted in the Court of Law.

Setting up of Chemical Zone in Umred Tehsil, Nagpur

17. SHRI SURINDER KUMAR SINGLA:

DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Environmental Clearance has been taken by the Government of Maharashtra for creating a Chemical Zone in Umred Tehsil of Nagpur District or thereabout;

(b) if so, what are the conditions of the said clearance or permission; and

(c) if not, what action is being taken on the Government's decision to set up the Chemical Zone in the catchment area of irrigation projects and proxmity to forests?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) No such environmental clearance has been given by the Central Government.

(c) Before according environmental clearance to development projects, due consideration is given to protect the catchment and forest areas.

Use of Forest Land by Industries

18. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to allow industry to use forest land for commercial plantation; if so, details thereof;

(b) whether the interest of tribal people living in such forests have been taken care of, if so, the details thereof, and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) In view of the increasing threat of encroachment upon the large quantum of degraded forest land in the country and the need to afforest it urgently so as to expand green cover, inhibit encroachment and halt soil denudation and also to meet fuel and fodder needs and thereby to reduce pressure on existing natural forests and protected areas, the Government is considering to involve industry in afforestation of severely degraded areas in partnership with State Forests Development corporations so as to augment the efforts and the financial resources available for afforesation schemes of the Central and Statae Governments, NGOs and People's Cooperatives.

(b) The scheme under consideration will be finalised only after careful assessment of various issue involved and ensuring protection of traditional rights and concessions being enjoyed by the rural and tribal communities. As envisioned, the scheme is intended to benefit rural and tribal communities by increasing the availability of biomas, fuelwood and fodder, and also opening up avenues for rural employment generation.

(c) Does not arise.

Encroachment of Forest Land

19. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 5 per cent of 35 million hectares of degraded forest land in the country has been encroached upon;